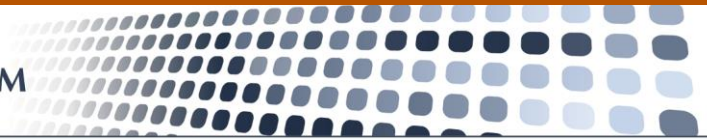




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International Dictatorship or International Democracy. A Discussion of Albert Camus' 1946 Considerations

by

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Abstract

In the series *Neither Victims Nor Executioners* (1946) the Franco-Algerian writer Albert Camus argued for the need of a relative utopia that would allow man, who refused the logic of murder and violence, to revolt against their historical condition. To this end Camus stressed the importance of fighting for a new democratic world order that would have reversed the condition of international dictatorship immanent in the interdependent world of the 20th century. In the series of essays another reading is possible; an attempt to find a new political way after the end of the classic modern world - a system founded on the supremacy of European nation-States - and to consider such an attempt as an interesting standpoint to face current transnational challenges.

Key-words

Camus, International Democracy, International Dictatorship, Fear, Utopia, World Order



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«...l'histoire n'est que l'effort désespéré des hommes pour donner corps aux plus clairvoyants de leurs rêves». Albert Camus, Ni victimes ni bourreaux, 1946

The current era is marked by transnational problems and crisis, with migration, war, unemployment, recession, and terrorism shattering the lives of human beings across several regions of the world in a vicious dynamic of interaction that does not respect national borders^I. In such a devastating spiral consideration for human life decreases; man becomes a sort of object on which is normal and rightful to practice and impose physical, moral and psychological violence^{II}. Thus, in the contemporary scenario we see the simultaneous and connected development of an interdependent transnational crisis, and a deep devaluation of human dignity. In this connection it is possible to identify a key feature not only of current times but also of the entire twentieth century, a sort of unresolved issue that continues to recur in new guises^{III}. In order to better understand and critique some crucial and original elements of this connection, and of our epoch, it is interesting to analyze some of the Franco-Algerian writer Albert Camus' considerations in his famous series of essays *Neither Victims Nor Executioners* (published in the journal "Combat" in 1946)^{IV}.

1.

At the outset Camus noticed that much as the seventeenth century was the century of mathematics, the eighteenth that of the physical sciences, and the nineteenth that of biology, "our twentieth century is the century of fear"^V(Camus 2002b : 636). For Camus, it was not only the dangerous new scientific development but also the new existential condition of human beings that created the "humus" for the development of fear. In fact the removal of any perspective on the future and the increasing silence among individuals and peoples created an inhumane context in which fear and terror became structural features:

"Ce qui frappe le plus, en effet, dans le monde où nous vivons, c'est d'abord, et en général, que la plupart des hommes (sauf les croyants de toutes espèces) sont privés d'avenir. Il n'y a pas de vie valable



sans projection sur l'avenir, sans promesse de mûrissement et de progrès. Vivre contre un mur, c'est la vie des chiens. Eh bien ! les hommes de ma génération et de celle qui entre aujourd'hui dans les ateliers et les facultés ont vécu et vivent de plus en plus comme des chiens. Naturellement, ce n'est pas la première fois que des hommes se trouvent devant un avenir matériellement bouché. Mais ils en triomphaient ordinairement par la parole et par le cri. Ils en appelaient à d'autres valeurs, qui faisaient leur espérance. Aujourd'hui, personne ne parle plus (sauf ceux qui se répètent), parce que le monde nous paraît mené par des forces aveugles et sourdes qui n'entendront pas les cris d'avertissements, ni les conseils, ni les supplications... Le long dialogue des hommes vient de s'arrêter. Et, bien entendu, un homme qu'on ne peut pas persuader est un homme qui fait peur... Nous vivons dans la terreur parce que la persuasion n'est plus possible, parce que l'homme a été livré tout entier à l'histoire et qu'il ne peut plus se tourner vers cette part de lui-même, aussi vraie que la part historique, et qu'il retrouve devant la beauté du monde et des visages ; parce que nous vivons dans le monde de l'abstraction, celui des bureaux et des machines, des idées absolues et du messianisme sans nuances. Nous étouffons parmi les gens qui croient avoir absolument raison, que ce soit dans leurs machines ou dans leurs idées. Et pour tous ceux qui ne peuvent vivre que dans le dialogue et dans l'amitié des hommes, ce silence est la fin du monde”^{VI} (Camus 2002b : 636-639).

Thus, according to Camus, for men who did not want to use violence or to suffer it, it was necessary to come to terms with such a situation of fear, and the realization of what was implied and rejected. Moreover, it was “a world where murder is legitimate, and where human life is considered trifling” (Camus 2002b: 640). Once this was realized any man who wanted to revolt^{VII} against “murder” and “violence” - either committed or suffered – had to see the problem from another point of view that would have necessitated a critical analysis of the human being’s role in the face of reality, and in particular within the sort of new political condition that, having begun in the nineteen-thirties, was fixed by the World War II^{VIII}.

2.

So what was the role of the subjects who, rejecting any legitimization of murder, refused the logic of violence in the face of reality^{IX} ? They had to choose a utopia^X that



would have helped to save what was possible to save, starting from the human bodies, or better from the same possibility of a future. As Camus said:

“Sauver ce qui peut encore être sauvé, pour rendre l’avenir seulement possible, voilà le grand mobile, la passion et le sacrifice demandés. Cela exige seulement qu’on y réfléchisse et qu’on décide clairement s’il faut encore ajouter à la peine des hommes pour des fins toujours indiscernables, s’il faut accepter que le monde se couvre d’armes et que le frère tue le frère à nouveau, ou s’il faut, au contraire, épargner autant qu’il est possible le sang et la douleur pour donner seulement leur chance à d’autres générations qui seront mieux armées que nous”^{XI} (Camus 2002b : 669).

This utopia was seen as “relative” , a direct polemic against the Marxist idea of an “absolute” utopia that – in adopting the logic of “*la fin justifie les moyens*”^{XII} – would legitimate any kind of barbarism and violence in the name of history and of its eschatological end^{XIII}. In this sense such a utopia would be the equivalent of a “*pensée politique modeste*” or “*délivrée de tout messianisme, et débarrassée de la nostalgie du paradis terrestre*” (Camus 2002b : 644), and was, for Camus, the only possible position for those who wanted to change the world situation in a way that avoided reducing men to a tool :

“Après avoir un peu réfléchi à cette question, il me semble que les hommes qui désirent aujourd’hui changer efficacement le monde ont à choisir entre les charniers qui s’annoncent, le rêve impossible d’une histoire tout d’un coup stoppée, et l’acceptation d’une utopie relative qui laisse une chance à la fois à l’action et aux hommes. Mais il n’est pas difficile de voir qu’au contraire, cette utopie relative est la seule possible et quelle est seule inspirée de l’esprit de réalité”^{XIV} (Camus 2002b : 652-653).

But in order to move towards such a relative utopia, to realize it as part of history, it was necessary to consider the new political, social and economic conditions created during the nineteen-thirties and ‘forties. The “century of fear” was also the century of world interdependence, of a context that was no longer governable from a national or local point of view. It was an epoch that, according to Camus, gave rise to the issue of a new universal order.



3.

It is from this perspective that I argue that Camus' analysis is one of the most penetrating of his time^{xv}. On this point it is important to underline that, since 1944, he had been exposed to Altiero Spinelli's federalism through his engagement inside the "*Comité français pour la fédération européenne*". A product of these encounters with Spinelli was a developed definition of his conviction on which he had reflected since 1939: that the age of European nation-State as an autonomous and constructive political actor was over^{xvi}. In the new era of interdependence it was impossible to have an independent internal and foreign policy as was the case in the nineteenth century^{xvii} (a point already understood by Colorni and Spinelli in 1943). At the same time Camus refused to align himself with either of the two international superpowers: the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R. In fact, in accordance with his social-libertarianism^{xviii}, he rejected not only Russian totalitarianism but also the idea of accepting American ideological and political hegemony. Indeed although he considered the latter as a lesser evil (compared to the USSR) it was, nevertheless, to be avoided^{xix}. Thus it is interesting to notice how the following analysis by Camus was fostered by the idea of finding a different political direction beyond the alternatives represented by communism and capitalist democracy,^{xx} and that such a direction emerged from a critical discussion of the role of the nation-State in a world that had become evidently interdependent:

"Nous savons aujourd'hui qu'il n'y a plus d'îles et que les frontières sont vaines. Nous savons que dans un monde en accélération constante, où l'Atlantique se traverse en moins d'une journée, où Moscou parle à Washington en quelques heures, nous sommes forcés à la solidarité ou à la complicité, suivant les cas"^{xxi} (Camus 2002b : 653).

For Camus it was important to fully understand all the implications of change that related to the changing dominance of Western civilization, put into question by processes of decolonization. In fact:

"Nous centrons aujourd'hui nos réflexions autour du problème allemand, qui est un problème secondaire par rapport au choc d'empires qui nous menace. Mais si, demain, nous concevions des



solutions internationales en fonction du problème russoaméricain, nous risquerions de nous voir à nouveau dépassés. Le choc d'empires est déjà en passe de devenir secondaire, par rapport au choc des civilisations. De toutes parts, en effet, les civilisations colonisées font entendre leurs voix. Dans dix ans, dans cinquante ans, c'est la prééminence de la civilisation occidentale qui sera remise en question^{XXII} (Camus 2002b : 659).

In such a scenario there was no possible space for national states' or particular solutions of any kind. For Camus revolution could exist only as a global revolution:

“La vérité, que je m'excuse d'écrire en clair, alors que tout le monde la connaît sans la dire, c'est que nous ne sommes pas libres, en tant que Français, d'être révolutionnaires. Ou du moins nous ne pouvons plus être des révolutionnaires solitaires parce qu'il n'y a plus, dans le monde, aujourd'hui, de politiques conservatrices ou socialistes qui puissent se déployer sur le seul plan national. Ainsi, nous ne pouvons parler que de révolution internationale. Exactement, la révolution se fera à l'échelle internationale ou elle ne se fera pas^{XXIII} (Camus 2002b : 650-651).

The regime of dictatorship that Camus denounced as typical of his context was a system of “international dictatorship” in which governments – the executive powers – made international law without caring for the people's will (Camus 2002b : 657). It is interesting to note how different Camus's concept of dictatorship was when compared to classic or modern ones^{XXIV}. First it was not conceived simply as the unlimited dominant power of the State (nor as a temporary measure to protect the ordinary functioning of the State through the suspension of its normal political equilibrium in favour of a single leader), but as the power of a specific institution of the State – the executive power – to make law in place of the others. Second, and more interestingly, this “international” dictatorship was founded on the need, following the new interdependence of the twentieth century, for “international law” that – without a world parliament – could be made only by states' executives. Thus governments, lacking any control at the international level, ended up as the arbitrary masters of this law, with the consequent destruction of the basis of democracy (“une forme de société où la loi est au-dessus des gouvernants”). Thus for people who wanted to change the world – in accordance with the “relative utopia” that we saw above – it was clear that the target had to be different from that of the past :



“Nous savons donc tous, sans l'ombre d'un doute, que le nouvel ordre que nous cherchons ne peut être seulement national ou même continental, ni surtout occidental ou oriental. Il doit être universel. Il n'est plus possible d'espérer des solutions partielles ou des concessions” (Camus 2002b : 654). And again *“Oui, nous devons enlever son importance à la politique intérieure. On ne guérit pas la peste avec les moyens qui s'appliquent aux rhumes de cerveau. Une crise qui déchire le monde entier doit se régler à l'échelle universelle. L'ordre pour tous, afin que soit diminué pour chacun le poids de la misère et de la peur, c'est aujourd'hui notre objectif logique”*^{xxv} (Camus 2002b: 664).

This task would have involved some significant corollaries such as:

“1° que la politique intérieure, considérée dans sa solitude, est une affaire proprement secondaire et d'ailleurs impensable. 2° que le seul problème est la création d'un ordre international qui apportera finalement les réformes de structure durables par lesquelles la révolution se définit ; 3° qu'il n'existe plus, à l'intérieur des nations, que des problèmes d'administration qu'il faut régler provisoirement, et du mieux possible, en attendant un règlement politique plus efficace parce que plus général”^{xxvi} (Camus 2002b: 663).

According to such a view, the only new universal order that was possible and desirable in order to concretely delegitimize the logic of violence and murder, was one of international democracy order; an order that in Camus' conceptualization was implicit on the people's consensus.^{xxvii}

4.

By international democracy Camus meant a system that completely overturned - revolutionized - the kind of dictatorship that he observed in his times. It was clear for Camus that in an interdependent world the people can only choose between two different kinds of international political regime, democratic or dictatorial:

“Mais qu'est-ce que la démocratie internationale ?... Qu'est-ce que la démocratie nationale ou internationale ? C'est une forme de société où la loi est au-dessus des gouvernants, cette loi étant



l'expression de la volonté de tous, représentée par un corps législatif. Est-ce là ce qu'on essaie de fonder aujourd'hui ? On nous prépare, en effet, une loi internationale. Mais cette loi est faite ou défaite par des gouvernements, c'est-à-dire par l'exécutif. Nous sommes donc en régime de dictature internationale. La seule façon d'en sortir est de mettre la loi internationale au-dessus des gouvernements, donc de faire cette loi, donc de disposer d'un parlement, donc de constituer ce parlement au moyen d'élections mondiales auxquelles participeront tous les peuples. Et puisque nous n'avons pas ce parlement, le seul moyen est de résister à cette dictature internationale sur un plan international et selon des moyens qui ne contrediront pas la fin poursuivie^{xxviii} (Camus 2002b: 657).

The supremacy of executive powers – that made international law, and which ended up with control over national parliaments - was equated with an international dictatorship, which it was necessary to resist. This resistance was finally to lead to a reversal of such a dictatorship in a system in which a legislative assembly – in a new universal formation - would take back authority over the executive powers, creating an international democracy. In order to attain the latter it would be necessary to sign a new social contract among individuals that would have helped to go beyond the logic that ruled contemporary governments, preventing them from becoming part of the transformation imagined by Camus:

“Ils [the engaged men] admettront qu'ils n'ont pas grand-chose à attendre des gouvernements actuels, puisque ceux-ci vivent et agissent selon des principes meurtriers. Le seul espoir réside dans la plus grande peine, celle qui consiste à reprendre les choses à leur début pour refaire une société vivante à l'intérieur d'une société condamnée. Il faut donc que ces hommes, un à un, refassent entre eux, à l'intérieur des frontières et pardessus elles, un nouveau contrat social qui les unisse suivant des principes plus raisonnables^{xxix} (Camus 2002b: 664-665).

As a resistant/constituent subject Camus thus imagined a movement that could base itself inside nations, on work-communities and, internationally, on intellectual communities:

“... les premières, selon des contrats de gré à gré sur le mode coopératif, soulageraient le plus grand nombre possible d'individus et dont les secondes s'essaieraient à définir les valeurs dont vivra cet ordre



international, en même temps qu'elles plaideraient pour lui, en toute occasion. Plus précisément, la tâche de ces dernières serait d'opposer des paroles claires aux confusions de la terreur et de définir en même temps les valeurs indispensables à un monde pacifié. Un code de justice internationale dont le premier article serait l'abolition générale de la peine de mort, une mise au clair des principes nécessaires à toute civilisation du dialogue pourraient être ses premiers objectifs. Ce travail répondrait aux besoins d'une époque qui ne trouve dans aucune philosophie les justifications nécessaires à la soif d'amitié qui brûle aujourd'hui les esprits occidentaux. Mais il est bien évident qu'il ne s'agirait pas d'édifier une nouvelle idéologie. Il s'agirait seulement de rechercher un style de vie^{xxx} (Camus 2002: 665-666).

Such an effort towards international democracy and peace had to be led by men who refused to be either victims or executioners and who accepted the consequences of that choice. Camus did not know if they would have concretely begun such a revolt. But he firmly insisted on its rationale, affirming the importance for men to react rationally, with a moral and political fight, against the inhumanity and the nihilism of their historical context^{xxxi} :

“Oui, ce qu'il faut combattre aujourd'hui, c'est la peur et le silence, et avec eux la séparation des esprits et des âmes qu'ils entraînent. Ce qu'il faut défendre, c'est le dialogue et la communication universelle des hommes entre eux. La servitude, l'injustice, le mensonge sont les fléaux qui brisent cette communication et interdisent ce dialogue. C'est pourquoi nous devons les refuser. Mais ces fléaux sont aujourd'hui la matière même de l'histoire et, partant, beaucoup d'hommes les considèrent comme des maux nécessaires. Il est vrai, aussi bien, que nous ne pouvons pas échapper à l'histoire, puisque nous y sommes plongés jusqu'au cou. Mais on peut prétendre à lutter dans l'histoire pour préserver cette part de l'homme qui ne lui appartient pas. C'est là tout ce que j'ai voulu dire^{xxxii} (Camus 2002: 670).

5.

The *Neither Victims Nor Executioners* series is, of course, deeply marked by the context of its publication that saw the beginning of Cold War and the desire to react against what had been determined by the outcome of World War II^{xxxiii}. But it would be erroneous to consider this text as merely a product of such a specific context. As was demonstrated by Neil Foxlee in a recent book, it is useful to adopt a multi-contextual approach to



understand the meaning of a text (Foxlee 2010). Thus in our case it is also possible to discover a part of the meaning of the same text by considering it as a product of the great crisis of the interwar period that would mark all the twentieth century. From this point of view *Neither Victims Nor Executioners* is a critical reflection on what had structurally changed in the twentieth century compared to the world of the nineteenth century, and also on the dangerous identity of new times. Camus forced people who wanted to react against such a *Stimmung* to see the most immediate political choice that they had to make, but through new lenses. In fact in a world that had become interdependent the alternative was to remain in an existing regime of international dictatorship - in which the executive powers were sovereign through their ability to make law in and for the international space - or to fight, with instruments that were not contradictory to their main aim, for a regime of international democracy in which the people would be sovereign through the control of a new world parliament over the executive powers. For Camus, the creation of a new world order^{xxxiv} had to be the main effort of his fellows who did not want to legitimize the existing condition of widespread fear. In fact it was impossible to concretely protect dialogue, justice and peace - thus delegitimizing the logic of murder - without a universal law, founded on the consensus of world people^{xxxv}. Camus fiercely stressed the importance of removing the power of the law (a point he examined in several writings) from those who wanted to use it for criminal intentions, and especially from governments such as those of the U.S.S.R and the U.S.A. that were able to act as hegemons in the international space (also through the UN, see Foley 2014: 44).

From this point of view the thought of Camus was radical: it was strictly necessary to reverse the regime of international dictatorship and it was only possible to do so by working towards an international democracy, for alternatively the nihilism of legitimate murder would have continued unabated. He was, also, the first twentieth century intellectual who unequivocally adhered to the rejection of the logic of murder - not only of war - with the creation of a new world democracy^{xxxvi}. For Camus, this involved the idea of the creation, through a civil society transnational movement, of a new style of life, with new principles, that would have prepared the path towards the creation of the world parliament and would have stimulated the drive towards a new universal law. In this sense his message simultaneously had moral and political weight. In such a thought there was, in fact, the idea of educating - through bottom up political action - civil society to adopt



another kind of behavior and of co-existence that, in the end, would have involved the mutual agreement of each part about the creation of a new universal and democratic order. From this point of view the direction indicated by Camus was particularly narrow and in a certain measure contradictory: in order to obtain a kind of international democracy (and with it a strategic result against the logic of violence and murder and the consequent spirit of fear) it was necessary to create a new lifestyle with a slow transnational non-governmental action in a moment in which it was necessary to find a rapid global answer to common and ruinous problems. But at the same time Camus' interest was less focused on political strategy than on finding the beginning of a new logic, useful to conceive and transform the future of the world, to reveal the true big issues of his century and to change the mind of some decisive political actors: the men who, preferring the logic of dialogue, refused to be victims or executioners.

6.

It is possible to accuse Camus of being more utopist than those he accused of being in favor of an “absolute Utopia”, or to be too influenced by the “Jacobin” idea of the supremacy of the legislative power over the executive one^{xxxvii}. But, finally, it could be more worthwhile evaluating if the question that he stressed is completely out of touch with today's reality. Yes, of course, our world is politically disunited, divided into regional areas and more fragmented than the world of Cold War (Colombo 2010). But can such a multipolar and non-democratic world find a way to manage transnational problems and to fight the return of the legitimization of violence on a global scale? And if the answer is no, that the situation will continue unchanged, the perspective stressed by Camus might still preserve some critical suggestions for us.

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¹ See the analytical section in *Les convivialistes* 2013.



^{II} It is important to notice that our problem is not only a matter of imposed or received violence. There is also a problem linked with the “desire” to be victim. In fact, as stressed by Wendy Brown, we can also desire to suffer violence and we can found our formation as subjects on such a masochism (Brown 2001: 45-61).

^{III} Toni Jundt argues that considering all the deep differences rooted in particular 20th century contexts - we must not undervalue the continuity of our history and of our problems that are for many aspects the same of the 20th century (Jundt, 2009: 1-22).

^{IV} See Camus 2002b: 631-672. For the history of the journal see Lévi-Valensi 2002a: 19-70 and for the relationship between Camus and “Combat” see Lévi-Valensi 2002b: 71-109. See also Todd 1996: 501-602. Regarding the thought of Camus - and the bibliography concerning him - see Hughes 2007; Guérin 2009; Vanborre 2012; Bresolin 2013 and Foley 2014.

^V This issue of the relevance of fear returned inside “*La peste*” (1947) and in the play “*L’état de siège*” (1948) where revolt is possible only if fear is faced and defeated. See Camus 2013a : 758.

^{VI} “The most striking feature of the world we live in is that most of its inhabitants - with the exception of pietists of various kinds - are cut off from the future. Life has no validity unless it can project itself toward the future, can ripen and progress. Living against a wall is a dog's life. True - and the men of my generation, those who are going into the factories and the colleges, have lived and are living more and more like dogs. This is not the first time, of course, that men have confronted a future materially closed to them. But hitherto they have been able to transcend the dilemma by words, by protests, by appealing to other values which lent them hope. Today no one speaks any more (except those who repeat themselves) because history seems to be in the grip of blind and deaf forces which will heed neither cries of warning, nor advice, nor entreaties... Mankind's dialogue has just come to an end. And naturally a man with whom one cannot reason is a man to be feared... We live in terror because persuasion is no longer possible; because man has been wholly submerged in History; because he can no longer tap that part of his nature, as real as the historical part, which he recaptures in contemplating the beauty of nature and of human face, because we live in a world of abstractions, of bureaus and machines, of absolute ideas and of crude messianism. We suffocate among people who think they are absolutely right, whether in their machines or in their ideas. And for all who can live only in an atmosphere of human dialogue and sociability, this silence is the end of the world”. Translation by the author.

^{VII} « *Qu'est-ce qu'un homme révolté ? Un homme qui dit non* » (Camus 1951 : 27). It is important to notice that in November 1946 Camus has already begun - with *Lettres à un ami allemande* (1945); *Remarque sur la révolte* (1945) and with *La crise de l'homme* (March 1946) - his reflection on the revolt and the rebel that will bring him to publish *La peste* (1947) and *L'homme révolté* in 1951. Thus the same series of 1946 could be considered an elaboration's moment of such a thought that Camus in 1957 defined as the “positive” phase of his work. See Valle, 2013:11-18. Regarding the relations among the different phases, or “cycles”, lived by Camus' thought see Novello 2010: 8.

^{VIII} See Camus 2002b: 659-660.

^{IX} Camus wrote this series especially having in mind the points of view and the contradictions of contemporary French and European Socialists which the journal “Combat” regularly used to address.

^X “... *l'utopie est ce qui est en contradiction avec la réalité*”. Camus, 2002b : 642-643

^{XI} “To save what can be saved so as to open up some kind of future - that is the prime mover, the passion and the sacrifice that is required. It demands only that we reflect and then decide, clearly, whether humanity's lot must be made still more miserable in order to achieve far-off and shadowy ends, whether we should accept a world bristling with arms where brother kills brother; or whether, on the contrary, we should avoid bloodshed and misery as much as possible so that we give a chance for survival to later generations better equipped than we are”. Translation by the author.

^{XII} This is essentially the logic that Camus wanted to destroy. In 1951, regarding the issue, he wrote “*La fin justifie les moyens? Cela est possible. Mais qui justifiera la fin ? A cette question, que la pensée historique laisse pendante la révolte répond : les moyens*”. Camus 1951: 365. Also in the series of essays of 1946 he underlines how “*Dans les perspectives du marxisme, cent mille morts ne sont rien, en effet, au prix du bonheur de centaines de millions de gens. Mais la mort certaine de centaines de millions de gens, pour le bonheur supposé de ceux qui restent, est un prix trop cher. Le progrès vertigineux des armements, fait historique ignoré par Marx, force à poser de nouvelle façon le problème de la fin et des moyens. Et le moyen, ici, ferait éclater la fin. Quelle que soit la fin désirée, si haute et si nécessaire soit-elle, qu'elle veuille ou non consacrer le bonheur des hommes, qu'elle veuille consacrer la justice ou la liberté, le moyen employé pour y parvenir représente un risque si définitif, si disproportionné en grandeur avec les chances de succès, que nous refusons objectivement de le courir*” Camus 2002b : 656.



XIII For Camus' critique of Marxist historical theodicy see Sharpe 2015: 135-148.

XIV "Those who want to change the world must, it seems to me, now choose between the charnel-house threatened by the impossible dream of history suddenly struck motionless, and the acceptance of a relative Utopia which gives some leeway to action and to mankind. Relative Utopia is the only realistic choice...". Translation by the author.

XV In the 'forties a very similar analysis was developed by Altiero Spinelli and Eugenio Colorni; in a couple of letters in 1943 they stressed the new importance of international politics and the end of any space for a national revolution or for a national politics independent from the world powers. See Spinelli, 1993: 189-218. It's important here to underline that Camus had been in touch with Spinelli since 1944 (they finally meet in 1945) and that he was engaged in the struggle for European federation. See Gouzy 2010: 273-275 and Camus 1945: 16-20. Another important analysis on the new relevance of international politics by Alexandre Kojève in *Esquisse d'une doctrine de la politique française* (1945) affirmed that in the 20th century Nation-States were no more political realities because of the new technological situation that needed new transnational actors as Empires. About this text of Kojève and the problems related to its publication see the considerations of Tedesco, 2006: 373-401.

XVI See the articles in « Le Soir Républicain » in Camus 1978: 611-657.

XVII One of the most interesting, and fundamental accounts of such an intellectual and political encounter was the letter that Spinelli sent to Camus on 18th March 1945. In this letter Spinelli strongly defended the positive connection between the future of democratic civilization and the European federalist choice. According to this letter it would have been impossible to create any democratic order on the basis of European nation-State and it was necessary to rationally persuade the new political class that the nation-State era was ended. See Spinelli 1996: 490-492.

XVIII On this see also the discussed book by Onfray, 2012.

XIX E.g. In 1948 he distinguished among two kind of *technolâtries*: the Russian one, or totalitarian and the American one or "total", centered on soft power that he considered more seductive and penetrant (Todd 1996 :626-627).

XX It is not the case that in 1948 Camus supported the *Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire* that was founded on a program that tried to individuate an alternative to communism and capitalist democracy. Furthermore this movement was in favor of a kind of European federalism (see Todd 1996: 620-626).

XXI "We know today that there are no more islands, that frontiers are just lines on a map. We know that in a steadily accelerating world, where the Atlantic is crossed in less than a day and Moscow speaks to Washington in a few minutes, we are forced into fraternity - or complicity". Translation by the author.

XXII "Today we concentrate our political thinking on the German problem, which is a secondary problem compared to the clash of empires which threatens us. But if tomorrow we resolve the Russo-American conflict, we may see ourselves once more outdistanced. Already the clash of empires is in process of becoming secondary to the clash of civilizations. Everywhere the colonial peoples are asserting themselves. Perhaps in ten years, perhaps in fifty, the dominance of Western civilization itself will be called into question". Translation by the author

XXIII "The truth is - excuse me for stating openly what every one knows and no one says - the truth is that we French are not free to make a revolution. Or at least that we can be no longer revolutionary all by ourselves, since there no longer exists any policy, conservative or socialist, which can operate exclusively with a national framework. Thus we can only speak of world revolution. The revolution will be made on a world scale or it will not be made at all". Translation by the author.

XXIV About these meanings see Nolte 1972: 900-924 and Bracher 1993.

XXV "We know, then, without shadow of a doubt, that the new order we seek cannot be merely national, or even continental; certainly not occidental nor oriental. It must be universal. No longer can we hope for anything from partial solutions or concessions". And again "Yes, we must minimize domestic politics. It's impossible to cure plague with remedies used for headache. A crisis which tears the whole world apart must be met on a universal scale. A social system for everybody which will somewhat allay each one's misery and fear is today our logical objective". Translation by the author.

XXVI "(1) domestic policy is in itself a secondary matter; (2) the only problem is the creation of a world order which will bring about those lasting reforms which are the distinguishing mark of a revolution; (3) within any given nation there exist now only administrative problems, to be solved provisionally after a fashion, until a solution is worked out which will be more effective because more general". Translation by the author.

XXVII "*L'ordre c'est le peuple qui consent*". Camus, 2002a: 177.



XXVIII “But what is international democracy?... International - or national - democracy is a form of society in which law has authority over those who govern, law being the expression of the common will as expressed in a legislative body. An international legal code is indeed now being prepared. But this code is made and broken by governments, that is by the executive power. We are thus faced with a regime of international dictatorship. The only way of extricating ourselves is to create a world parliament through elections in which all peoples will participate, which will enact legislation which will exercise authority over national governments. Since we do not have such a parliament, all we can do now is to resist international dictatorship; to resist on a world scale; and to resist by means which are not in contradiction with the end we seek”. Translation by the author.

XXIX “... little is to be expected from present-day governments, since these live and act according to a murderous code. Hope remains only in the most difficult task of all: to reconsider everything from the ground up, so as to shape a living society inside a dying society. Men must therefore, as individuals, draw up among themselves, within frontiers and across them, a new social contract which will unite them according to more reasonable principles”. Translation by the author.

XXX “...the former, organized co-operatively, would help as many individuals as possible to solve their material problems, while the latter would try to define the values by which this international community would live, and would also plead its cause on every occasion. More precisely, the latter's task would be to speak out clearly against the confessions of the Terror and at the same time to define the values by which a peaceful world may live. The first objectives might be the drawing up of an international code of justice whose Article No. 1 would be the abolition of the death penalty, and an exposition of the basic principles of a civilization of dialogue. Such an undertaking would answer the needs of an era which has found no philosophical justification for that thirst for fraternity which today burns in Western man. There is no idea, naturally, of constructing a new ideology, but rather of discovering a style of life”. Translation by the author.

XXXI The criticism of those who considered the history as the “tribunal of the world” is a central element of Camus’ thought (e.g. Camus 1951: 173-191). It explains also his aversion for Hegel – or better, considering the influence of the Kojève’s interpretation (Sabot 2009: 45-60), for a “French Hegel” (Baugh 2003) – and the vision that Camus had about justice: “*Je continue à croire que ce monde n’a pas de sens supérieur. Mais je sais que quelque chose en lui a du sens et c’est l’homme, parce qu’il est le seul être à exiger d’en avoir. Ce monde a du moins la vérité de l’homme et notre tâche est de lui donner ses raisons contre le destin lui-même*” (Camus 2013b : 484).

XXXII “Yes, it is fear and silence and the spiritual isolation they cause that must be fought today. And it is dialogue the universal intercommunication of men that must be defended. Slavery, injustice and lies destroy this intercourse and forbid this dialogue; and so we must reject them. But these evils are today the very stuff of History, so that many consider them necessary evils. It is true that we cannot ‘escape History’, since we are in it up to our necks. But one may propose to fight within History to preserve from History that part of man which is not its proper province. That is all I have to say here”. Translation by the author.

XXXIII On the importance of 1946 for the beginning of Cold War see Engerman 2010: 34-41.

XXXIV On the issue of world order in modern and contemporary history see Mark Mazower 2012.

XXXV Camus compared this future universal “law” to the “law of majority” affirming that “*Les problèmes que pose aujourd’hui le droit de veto sont faussés parce que les majorités ou les minorités qui s’opposent à l’O.N.U. sont fausses. L’U.R.S.S. aura toujours le droit de réfuter la loi de la majorité tant que celle-ci sera une majorité de ministres, et non une majorité de peuples représentés par leurs délégués et tant que tous les peuples, précisément, n’y seront pas représentés. Le jour où cette majorité aura un sens, il faudra que chacun lui obéisse ou rejette sa loi, c’est-à-dire déclare ouvertement sa volonté de domination*”. Camus 2002: 659.

XXXVI On this point it is possible to say that while the idea of the relation between world democracy and peace was introduced by several intellectuals in nineteenth century debates, no attention was dedicated, before Camus, to the issue of the legitimacy of violence and murder in the absence of a universal order (with its psychological, ethical and dualist – the will to be dominant or dominated – aspects).

XXXVII E.g. Robespierre affirmed several times the supremacy of the Parliament on the other institutions of the State because, in his view, the Legislative Assembly was decisive to give form to the sovereign power of the people (Battista 1997: 16).



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